

ACTIVITY - PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE CORPS OF DISCOVERY

ARTS DISCIPLINE:	Visual arts
THE ARTS STANDARD:	Standard 6 - Connections
THE BENCHMARK:	Know connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum
GRADES:	5-8

A.R.T.S. TRUNK OBJECTS

- Bone paint brush
- Earth pigment paints and rock samples in pouch
- Hide samples
- Hide scraper
- Lakota pictograph
- *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*, book
- *What Do We Know About the Plains Indians?*, book
- *Sounds of Discovery*, CD

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Paper bags
- Paraffin wax
- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Paper and pencils
- Iron
- Access to library and the Internet
- CD player

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

"Winter Counts," described by Jacqueline Left Hand Bull, were pictures painted on a large tanned buffalo hide and were used to keep an historical record for the community. Each figure or symbol represented an event. They were called winter counts because they were painted during long winters when the weather sometimes made outdoor activity difficult.

"Generally beginning in the center and following a spiral outward, they covered at least one, but often several years. There may have been an exceptionally successful buffalo hunt, or perhaps a long blizzard . . . and these would have been recorded by painting a representative picture on the hide."



PROCEDURE

- Divide students into small groups to brainstorm ways in which history can be recorded. Share the ideas generated with the whole class and discuss.
- Show the Lakota pictograph and discuss the notion of visual literacy, a way of "telling" a story in pictures or symbols.
- Allow time for students, working in their groups, to research the story of Lewis and Clark. They can use the books from the trunk as well as visiting the library and the Internet. Suggested websites are:
 - www.corpssofdiscovery.org/honor.htm
 - www.pbs.org/lewisandclark
- Encourage students to keep notes of their research. Also play for them the *Lewis and Clark: Sounds of Discovery* CD. It captures the ambience of the experience with songs, dances and natural sounds.
- Assign each group the task of designing a "winter count" which is based on their research and that "tells" the story of The Voyage of Discovery. You may want to designate a segment of the journey to certain groups. For instance:
 - planning and preparation
 - hiring men and packing supplies
 - St. Louis to Mandan
 - the winter of 1804 and 1805
 - Fort Mandan to Fort Clatsop
 - the return journey
- Tell each group that they must select what they consider important events to record. They will be responsible for explaining and/or defending their choices.
- Each group creates symbols for:
 - significant Corps members
 - significant tribes
 - significant events
- Each group develops a timeline for the whole journey (or for their designated segment) and combines the symbols with the time line to tell the story. Coach students how to plan out their design on scratch paper first and to sketch lightly on to the paper bag. This will facilitate rearranging spacing or making other adjustments if necessary. Working in a spiral fashion sometimes requires some trial and error. When the design is balanced and completely sketched, it can be colored.
- For a more "authentic" tanned hide look, rub paraffin wax over the bag and carefully crumple up the paper. This takes a lot of patience. When the bag is very soft, the student can tear it into a shape that looks like a buffalo hide. The educator can then iron the hide. Place an absorbent piece of paper or cloth over the paper before ironing. Do not iron directly onto the paper bag or the pressing surface of the iron could be damaged.
- Arrange for students to share their Lewis and Clark "visual history" and to defend or explain why they chose the symbols and the events they did.
- Hold a critique session to discuss the finished pictorial histories.
- Have students reflect in writing about this experience.



ASSESSMENT

- Depth of research accomplished.
- Creativity and attention to detail in creating symbols.
- Quality of completed pictorial history.
- Participation in group presentations.
- Personal reflection on the learning experience by each student.

